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ABSTRACT

This book reviews the career of Rufus Ballard Atwood, who served as president of Kentucky State University from 1929 to 1962. The book describes how he was often chosen by whites to represent the African American community on boards and commissions and how these appointments gave him access to the state's political and educational power structure. Atwood was a skilled interracial diplomat. His influence was always at risk, particularly when his tactics became obsolete in the new age of confrontational civil rights politics. The book examines Atwood's political relationships with state officials and his efforts to improve education for African Americans in Kentucky and the nation. It also appraises his contributions to Kentucky State University and his relationship with faculty and students, and evaluates his contributions to the civil rights movement in Kentucky. In addition, it compares Atwood's leadership style and the circumstances he confronted in Kentucky with those of black college presidents in other southern states. (Contains approximately 200 references.) (MAH)

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